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I. Problem:

1. To prepare plans for relieving the Binh Xuyen of control of the police and surety functions in the Saigon-Cholon area.

II. Assumptions:

2. Efforts to assure loyal and continued Binh Xuyen support of South Vietnam by political means will be unsuccessful.

III. Facts Bearing on the Problem:

3. The Binh Xuyen are a non-confessional sect with an estimated 8,700 armed men and an additional 20,000 unarmed reservists, of whom 5,000 of the latter have had some military training. The Binh Xuyen control from 80,000 to 200,000 people. The 8,700 armed personnel include 2,200 police, 4,500 troops and 2,000 Catholic militia who consider themselves attached to the Binh Xuyen (exact status of latter is unclear).

4. The Binh Xuyen were entrusted with police functions in the Saigon-Cholon area by personal decree of Bao Dai, Chief of State, in September of 1954. A large payment was reportedly made by the Binh Xuyen to Bao Dai for this police responsibility. Binh Xuyen implementation of police functions to date has been effective and well organized. The Binh Xuyen, like the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao Sects, fear elimination of their organizations by the government of South Vietnam.

5. Organization of the Binh Xuyen includes (a) the local traffic police and criminal investigation personnel in the Saigon-Cholon area, (b) an organization of two battalions of "shock troops" equipped with light weapons, capable of rapid mobility and popularly called "green berets" because of their distinctive head-dress, (c) five battalions of regular troops and (d) a "Special Action Committee" to carry out political assassinations and organize demonstrations.

6. The Binh Xuyen have various sources of revenue in the Saigon-Cholon complex including the following:

a. Taxation on road and river traffic. (A police post on the My Tho Road 2 Km southwest of Cholon, covered by armed guards in a tower, stops all commercial traffic. The Binh Xuyen also have a control post capable of intercepting commercial traffic on the Gocong Road 3 Km south of Cholon. There may be others.)

b. Control of gambling and prostitution.

c. Participation in business enterprises such as fisheries, transport, coal and wood.

d. Control of certain commercial activities such as the painting of ships and boats.

The Binh Xuyen undoubtedly will not willingly give up the above sources of "illegal" revenue. (It is doubtful that a successor police organization would completely divorce itself from similar practices.)



7. The morale of Binh Xuyen troops is high and the majority are considered loyal to their leader, General Van Vien. Many of the officers are from Viet Minh areas of North and Central Vietnam. As a whole the Binh Xuyen are courageous though not very intelligent.

8. Recent meetings between Binh Xuyen, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai leaders may have resulted in agreement on some form of an alliance. The Binh Xuyen, smallest of the Sects in numbers, occupy a key position because of their potential control of the Capital and metropolitan area of South Vietnam. Because of these factors they stand to gain most from any coordinated Sect attempt to gain control of the Government and therefore might perpetrate such an attempt and dominate any attendant success accruing to the alliance. Reputedly a personal promise by General Van Vien, leader of the Binh Xuyen, to General Gaudier, French Commander in South Vietnam, is an important current factor in preventing disorder.

9. The Binh Xuyen are considered capable of isolating the Saigon-Cholon complex and exercising complete control of the area, requiring military action and considerable bloodshed to restore control to the Government of South Vietnam. Should the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao support the Binh Xuyen, and the French remain neutral, the present government might be overthrown.

10. It is reported that the Binh Xuyen have established strong-points in houses belonging to the Binh Xuyen in the Saigon-Cholon complex, garrisoning these strong-points and equipping the personnel with light armament to include mortars. (American intelligence agencies in Saigon do not know the location of these strong points). Key public offices and utilities have many Binh Xuyen employees and are guarded by Binh Xuyen police. In addition there are many Binh Xuyen armed representatives in civilian occupations throughout the city area. The Binh Xuyen have two armed Navy corvettes in the Saigon River.

11. The French have 3 regiments, 2 separate infantry battalions and 2 squadrons of Gendarmes in the general vicinity of Saigon-Cholon.

12. The Vietnamese National Army station list is attached as Annex C. The locations of these units are plotted on Tab B. Many VNA troops in the Saigon-Cholon complex are used as guards for military installations and government officials houses, or as clerks or janitors in military offices.

IV. Conclusions:

13. Because of the potential threat of the Binh Xuyen against the Government of South Vietnam, the latter must be prepared with appropriate plans for action against the Binh Xuyen, to be implemented if necessary.

14. Prior to replacing the existent Binh Xuyen police force, with or without military action, President Bien should request necessary directives from Bao Dai to General Van Vien, and should consider utilization of the Binh Xuyen in a reorganized police force under effective governmental control.



15. Any military action against the Binh Xuyen should be taken at night in order to:

- a. Avoid heavy loss of civilian lives.
- b. Catch Binh Xuyen off guard, with many personnel at home quarters.
- c. Speed movement of Vietnamese units through deserted streets of Saigon-Cholon.

V. Recommendations:

16. That implementation of measures a and b of the General Plan attached as Annex A, namely (a) organization of a potential "replacement nucleus" for the Binh Xuyen, and (b) Presidential decree concerning firearms be urged upon the Vietnamese Government at this time.

17. That steps in line with the remaining measures of the attached General Plan be noted and held in abeyance, to be urged upon the Vietnamese government at a later date if necessary.

18. That the Operational Plan attached as Annex B be noted and compared with the operational plan, same mission, to be submitted by the FMA.



ANNEX "A"

SUBJECT: General Plans (Steps) for Gaining Control of the Binh Xuyen
Short of Military Action

1. The Binh Xuyen are not currently in open insurrection against the government of South Vietnam nor have all possible measures been taken to eliminate potential opposition. Following are preliminary steps which should be taken, preferably in the order presented. Only after this General Plan has failed, or leads to strong indication of armed Binh Xuyen opposition as the result of implementation of this General Plan, should the Military Operational Order be decreed.

a. Organization of a "Replacement Nucleus" for the Binh Xuyen:

When the Binh Xuyen were given control of the Saigon-Cholon police in August-September of 1954 there was already in existence a police force with some degree of loyalty to the National Government. With the advent of the Binh Xuyen many key members of the old police force reportedly joined the VNA and are believed to be working in the Military Security Division of VNA. Records of previous members of the police force who might appropriately be considered as members of a "replacement nucleus" probably do not exist on paper. However, it can be safely assumed that a number of the ex-police officers now serving with the VNA are known to the VNA command. Personal inquiries could undoubtedly locate a sizable number. Proceeding with discretion and secrecy, capable "replacement nucleus" might be formed and kept in a state of readiness for supplanting the present hierarchy and other key officials in the Binh Xuyen police force. Many (some estimates as high as 2000) now serving with the Binh Xuyen police force joined as a matter of expediency and might welcome the elimination of Binh Xuyen domination.

b. Presidential Decree Concerning Firearms:

The President should give the power of licensing private firearms to the VNA as an emergency measure. The implementation of this decree would be gradual but might enable the army to first ferret out illegal civilian carriers of arms who may be Binh Xuyen supporters and subsequently check on the uniformed Binh Xuyen personnel performing other than police functions. This would not only uncover those now carrying arms illegally but would also provide a more accurate picture of Binh Xuyen strength and organization to replace current varying estimates.

c. Arrest of Key Binh Xuyen Personnel:

The following Binh Xuyen personnel, as a minimum, should be arrested and imprisoned, pending trial for sedition:

Brigadier General Le Van Vien - Binh Xuyen leader with absolute authority, exercises strict disciplinary control.

Lei Huu Sang - Chief of Police



Lai Huu Tai - Political Advisor
Colonel Thai - Chief of Staff and Commander, 1st Regiment
Lt Col Le Van Paul - Hon & Commissary of Van Vien, in charge
of Finance

Lt Col Hieu - Deputy Commander, 1st Regiment
Lt Col Phuoc - Chief, Fourth Bureau

Arrest of Binh Xuyen officials would be particularly effective because control rests in the hands of individuals as opposed to a hierarchy. Furthermore the Binh Xuyen claim no followers on the basis of "confessionalism" as do the other sects. (Some Catholic refugees from the North currently support the Binh Xuyen because the Binh Xuyen have in turn supported the Catholic refugees financially since their arrival in South Vietnam.)

4. Proposed Campaign Designed to Discredit the Binh Xuyen Leaders and Isolate Binh Xuyen from the Cao Daiists and Hon Hao:

(1) It appears common knowledge that the Binh Xuyen levy illegal taxes on civilian traffic and receive "payoffs" from many business establishments, particularly from gambling and prostitution. This, along with disclosure of attempts to overthrow the government by force, could be used as a basis for propaganda discrediting Binh Xuyen leaders.

(2) The Binh Xuyen, smallest of the Sects, have the most to gain from a coalition of the Sects, because of their key position in the capital and only metropolitan area. Therefore they are the most likely to perpetrate trouble and draw upon the other Sects for support, intending that the Binh Xuyen dominate a new government. This approach should be made to the other Sects to forestall their assisting the Binh Xuyen.

5. Coordination with the French:

Assurance of French support in any impending conflict with the Binh Xuyen should be obtained. The French should be requested and expected to "seal off" the Saigon-Cholon area as they did during the Dien-Bien conflict as their contribution to operations designed to eliminate the Binh Xuyen as an effective force.

2. Implementation of the above might lead to events demanding the issuance of a military order to eliminate the Binh Xuyen.



OPERATIONS ORDER 1

Reference: Map of Saigon, 1:25,000 attached as Tab A

Organization: Task Force Headquarters

Oper Command A (Key Binh Xuyen Posts)

Oper Command B (Road Blocks)

Oper Command C (Public Utilities & PW Enclosures)

Mobile Reserve

1. Situation:

The legitimate government of South Vietnam is threatened by the dissident Binh Xuyen. All peaceful attempts to remove this threat have failed.

a. Enemy forces:

(1) In Saigon-Cholon complex - 2,300 local police billeted in police stations and houses converted into "strong points", on local police duty or at home with families, plus 2 battalions of shock troops, one of which is located in the old Grande Mon gambling casino.

(2) Immediately outside Saigon-Cholon complex, primarily garrisoned along the roads to My Tho and Gocong, 5 battalions of regular troops.

(3) Unknown number of civilians, not to exceed estimated 500, armed with pistols or other small arms and working in offices and public utilities.

(4) Approximately 2,000 Catholic militia location unknown, who will probably not oppose government forces.

b. Friendly forces:

(1) Operational Command "A": Assembly area-racetrack immediately north of Cholon.

2d(?) Armored Battalion (consisting of 3 squadrons of approximately 12 armored vehicles each.)

1st Parachute Battalion

Co D, 6th Parachute Battalion

C Battery, 12th Field Artillery

63d Infantry Battalion, 15th Inf Regt

64th Infantry Battalion, 12th Inf Regt

(2) Operational Command "B": Assembly area-large empty fields immediately north of Blvd Frederick Drochot and west of Blvd Hui Bon Hoa

12th Infantry Regiment (less 1 Battalion)

65th Infantry Battalion, 12 Inf Regt

66th Infantry Battalion, 12th Inf Regt

12th Field Artillery Battalion (less 1 firing battery)

(3) Mobile Reserve Command: Assembly area-Palace Norodon

15th Infantry Regiment (less 63d Inf Bn)

61st Infantry Battalion, 15th Inf Regt

62d Inf Battalion, 15th Regt



(4) Guard Command: Assembly area-Saigon Zoo with PW Enclosure elements assembling at Quang Tre Training Center.

8th Parachute Battalion (less Co B)

516th Light Battalion

525th Light Battalion

528th Light Battalion

1st Presidential Guard Battalion

c. Attached:

(1) Saigon-Cholon Sector Command Detachment

(NOTE: The Saigon-Cholon Sector Command will consist of necessary troops (including 528th & 531st Light Battalions)) to assume the routine guard functions normally performed by the Task Force Units within the Saigon-Cholon area.)

(2) French Liaison Detachment (for effecting liaison with French Area Command Post).

2. Mission:

To eliminate all armed opposition to the National Government within the Saigon-Cholon complex.

3. Execution:

a. In a pre-dawn operation while a large portion of the Binh Xuyen are at home or asleep in quarters, key personalities and "strong points" of the enemy will be captured utilizing the psychological effect of superior power, plus armed attack if necessary. Captured personnel will be removed to a PW Enclosure at Quang Tre. Road blocks will be established at key points within the Saigon-Cholon complex and on roads leading into the area. Key public utilities installations such as communications centers, port facilities, and water and electric power supply points will be guarded against sabotage and the President and key government officials against retaliation. (The French forces will seal off the Saigon-Cholon complex and prevent reinforcement of the Binh Xuyen).

b. Operational Command A, organized into sub-commands specifically designed to capture enemy "strong points" A, B, C...., and including tanks, armored cars and artillery where appropriate, will capture and disarm enemy opposition at subject "strong points", without bloodshed where possible.

c. Operational Command B will establish road blocks at the following key road intersections and prevent Binh Xuyen troop movements:

- (1) Intersection of Blvd Tran Hung Dao and Blvd Gallieni.
- (2) Intersection of Rue Quang Trung and Rue Frere Louis.
- (3) Intersection of Blvd Frederic Broquet and Rue Chasseloup.
- (4) Intersection of Avenue Pierre Pasquier and Rue General Lise.



d. The Mobile Guard Command will:

(1) Provide guard detachments for the following installations and assure their use only by loyal government followers:

- (a) Telephone communications center
- (b) Radio communications centers
- (c) Public water reservoir
- (d) Electric power source
- (e) President's palace
- (f) Houses of the following key government officials:
President Diem; Defense Minister Minh.
- (g) Port facilities, and

(2) Establish a PW enclosure at Quang Tre Training Center capable of receiving a maximum of 5,000 PWs.

e. The Saigon-Cholon Sector Command will continue its responsibility for normal security functions within the Saigon-Cholon complex, utilizing a previously organized police force nucleus plus screened loyal members of the present police force to reorganize and reestablish normal police routine.

f. The French Command in South Vietnam will announce and implement the order of the French High Commissioner to seal off the Saigon-Cholon complex and protect the citizens therein, including large numbers of French citizens, from forces which intend to overthrow the Government of South Vietnam by force.

4. Administration and Logistics:

In the absence of a legally constituted police force martial law will be declared pending the establishment of an effective successor police force.

Quang Tre Training Center will be responsible for the proper administrative support of all PWs. All PWs will be screened and released when practicable.

Traffic police reporting for duty individually will be allowed to perform their routine duties until such time as the capture of Binh Xuyen "strong points" and key individuals has proceeded to the point where individual traffic police can be disarmed, screened, and, where practicable, reinstituted in a reorganized police force.

5. Command and Signal:

The Task Force Command Post will be located in the Headquarters building of the Vietnamese National Army.



Task Force Commander

ANNEX C

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>VNA Units in Saigon-Cholon Area</u> <u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTUAL STRENGTH</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
1st Para Bn	Cholon		
6th Para Bn	Saigon-Cholon		
64th Inf Bn	Bien Hoa		
61st Inf Bn, 15th Regt	Duc Hoa		
62nd Inf Bn, 15th Regt	Hoc Mon		
63rd Inf Bn, 15th Regt	Ca Chi		
65th Inf Bn, 12th Regt	Ben Cat		
66th Inf Bn, 12th Regt	Phuoc Hoa		
1st Presidential Gd Bn	Saigon-Cholon		
# 1st Armored Bn w/3 Sqdns	Gia Dinh		
12th Arty Bn	Thu Duc		3 Btry's of 105 How Bn being formed as of 1 Jan '55
516th Lt Bn	Quan Tre		In training
525th Lt Bn	Quan Tre		In training
526th Lt Bn	Quan Tre		In training
529th Lt Bn	Quan Tre		In training
531st Lt Bn	Gia Binh		In training

TOTAL: 2 Parach Bns; 6 Inf Bns; 1 Gd Bn; 1 Arm'd Bn; 1 Arty Bn (forming) and 5 Light Inf Bns (training).

The 1st Armored Bn is a dismantled unit with a very limited number of half tracks, perhaps only three. The only other VNA armor near Saigon is the 2nd(?) Armored Battalion located in the My Tho-Can Tho-Long Tuyen area approximately 60 kilometers SW of Cholon and reportedly consists of 2 Squadrons, each equipped with 8 MB scout cars and 8 half-tracks.

